

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Vernon County Courthouse

other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number Courthouse Square [n/a] not for publication

city or town Nevada [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Vernon code 217 zip code 64772

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
[X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National
Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the
property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
[] nationally [] statewide [X] locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [])

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

Date 21 May 97

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [])

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date

[] entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet []

[] determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet []

[] determined not eligible for the
National Register.

[] removed from the
National Register

[] other, explain
See continuation sheet []

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National
Register.

Name of related multiple property listing.

n/a

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

Government/courthouse

Current Functions

Government/courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Romanesque

Materials

foundation stone
walls stone

roof asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

Politics/Government

Architecture

Periods of Significance

1908-1947

Significant Dates

1908

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Kirsch, Robert G./Beagles & Dye

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☒ Local Government

☐ University

☐ Other:

Name of repository: Vernon County Courthouse

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.5 acres

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	380585	4188580			
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title see continuation sheet

organization _____ date _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Vernon County Courthouse
Vernon County, MO

Summary: Completed in 1908, the Vernon County Courthouse, Nevada, Vernon County, is built of regular courses of Carthage stone with an ashlar finish. The imposing three-story building measures 80 by 100 feet and rises to 126 feet at the top of the central tower. The building is rectangular in form and dominated by a clock tower which rises from the center of the roof. Wall dormers, corner towers, and gabled parapets, as well as arched door and window openings, successfully convey the building's Romanesque style. Although the courthouse was sandblasted in 1973, it still displays the essential features and elements of its design and retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location, and association.

Narrative: The main elevation faces south and is three bays wide, with the central bay having twelve steps and housing the main entrance, located on the second floor. A marble corner stone sits at the northeast corner. It is dated 1906 and engraved with "O.M. Wilson Grand Lodge". The rectangular building is dominated by a large clock tower which rises from a central location on the roof. The roof is interrupted by four steep-gabled wall dormers and by the pyramidal tops of the four corner towers which project from the main wall face. The facade is further articulated by a projecting, gabled, central bay which rises the full three stories of the building and projects an additional story above the eaves. On the ground level, an arched portal provides entry to the building through the projecting bay. A pair of short, thick colonnettes supports the arch on either side, and above the arch is a cornice which is surmounted by a plain parapet. A water table divides the ground level and first story. Flat arched double sash windows predominate, but on the second floor facade the wall face is penetrated on either side of the gabled feature by paired double-sash windows the flat tops of which are embraced by a semi-elliptical hand-cut stone arch. The window opening on the second story central feature is composed of three double-sash windows set within a segmental arch. The building is composed of regular courses of ashlar with a rock face.

In 1973, to remove sixty-five years of dirt and grime, the county had the building sandblasted at a cost of more than \$25,000.00. Despite the sandblasting, the essential features of design and the other elements of integrity are essentially undisturbed. In 1973, the negative effects of sandblasting were not as widely known as today; the court's intentions were good and the building generally has been well maintained.

South Elevation:

The dominant feature of the south elevation is the Main entrance highlighted by a pair of short, thick granite colonnettes which support the arch over the entryway that leads to the main level, which is the second floor. This main entrance is surrounded by ten single straight-topped windows on the first floor. Directly above the main entrance is a cut stone balcony engraved with the word "COURTHOUSE". On this second level there are four double straight-topped windows with straight-topped transoms, divided by mullions, and two single straight-topped windows with straight-topped transoms on each corner. Located on the third level above the main entrance is a triple window with arched transoms. Surrounding the triple windows are four double straight-topped windows with arched transoms divided by stone mullions and lintels, and two single straight-topped windows located on each corner with arched transoms divided by stone mullions. On the fourth floor (gable) is a triple straight-topped window with straight-topped transoms, mullions, and lintels. Directly above the fourth floor triple window is a massive hand carved pediment. Small turrets accent the projecting roof gable from the top of the third floor to the top of the fourth floor (attic).

The tower, which is located in the center of the building has three arched windows with arched transoms and stone lintels. Directly above the three windows is the clock face. Small turrets accent the clock tower.

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Vernon County Courthouse
Vernon County, MO

North Elevation:

The North elevation is similar to the South elevation with the following exceptions: There are no steps, as the entryway leads directly to the first level. There is no engraving on the cut stone balcony.

East Elevation:

The East elevation is similar to the North elevation with the following exceptions: There is no balcony above the entrance.

West Elevation:

The West elevation is similar to the East elevation with the following exceptions: There is a chimney located on the North side of the projecting gable.

Interior: Vernon County Courthouse, which is a three story structure, with three additional floors in the tower, stands as stately and proud today as when the circuit court convened there for the first time in 1908. Three years after its completion at a cost of \$95,215.38, electric light fixtures were installed throughout the building. A judge's room, jury room and library were added adjacent to the court room, which seats 310 people and is located on the second floor. Improvements have been carefully planned in order to retain the structure's architectural beauty. Large rooms have been partitioned into smaller ones more suitable for private offices.

Without a single elevator, one must climb 58 steps just to get to the courtroom. From the ground level to the clock, including 28 rungs of two ladders bolted to the walls, there are 183 steps, some of which are straight up. There are 33 rooms in the courthouse, not including the large courtroom, two walk-in vaults, three wide hallways, seven restrooms and the immense attic, which some believe was originally designed for a jail. Ceilings, which display the W.F. Norman sheet metal tiles, range from 12 to 15 feet in height. The main staircase, which was originally designed to be made of marble and iron, is made of quarter-sawed oak and is still intact today.

There have been mistakes in judgement, however. Beautiful hand painted murals that once decorated the arched walls outside the courtroom have long been hidden beneath layers of paint. Circuit Judge H.A. Kelso still shudders in dismay remembering the day he discovered WPA workmen atop tall ladders slapping paint over priceless scenes of virgin prairie and drifting clouds. The judge still hasn't given up hope that a way may still be found to safely restore the murals.

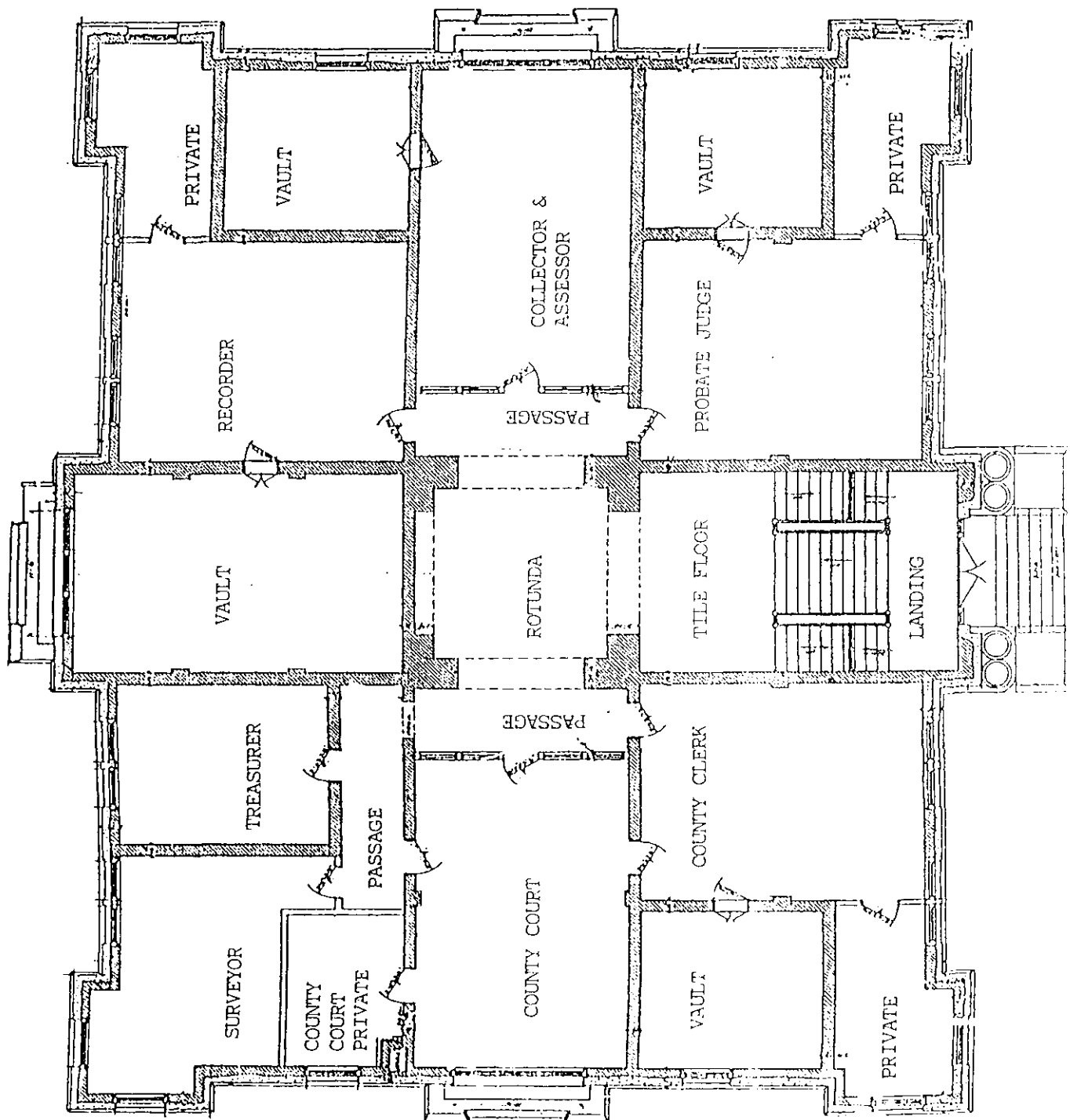
The granite and bronze monument of Nevada's most illustrious statesman, William Joel Stone, stands on the southwest corner of the courthouse lawn. Flag poles are situated on the south side and the northeast corner of the courthouse. Neither the monument or flagpoles are significant in size or scale and they are not related to the areas of significance of the courthouse; they are not included in the resource count.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3

Vernon County Courthouse
Vernon County, MO



Remaining floor plans are available at the County Commissioner's office.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

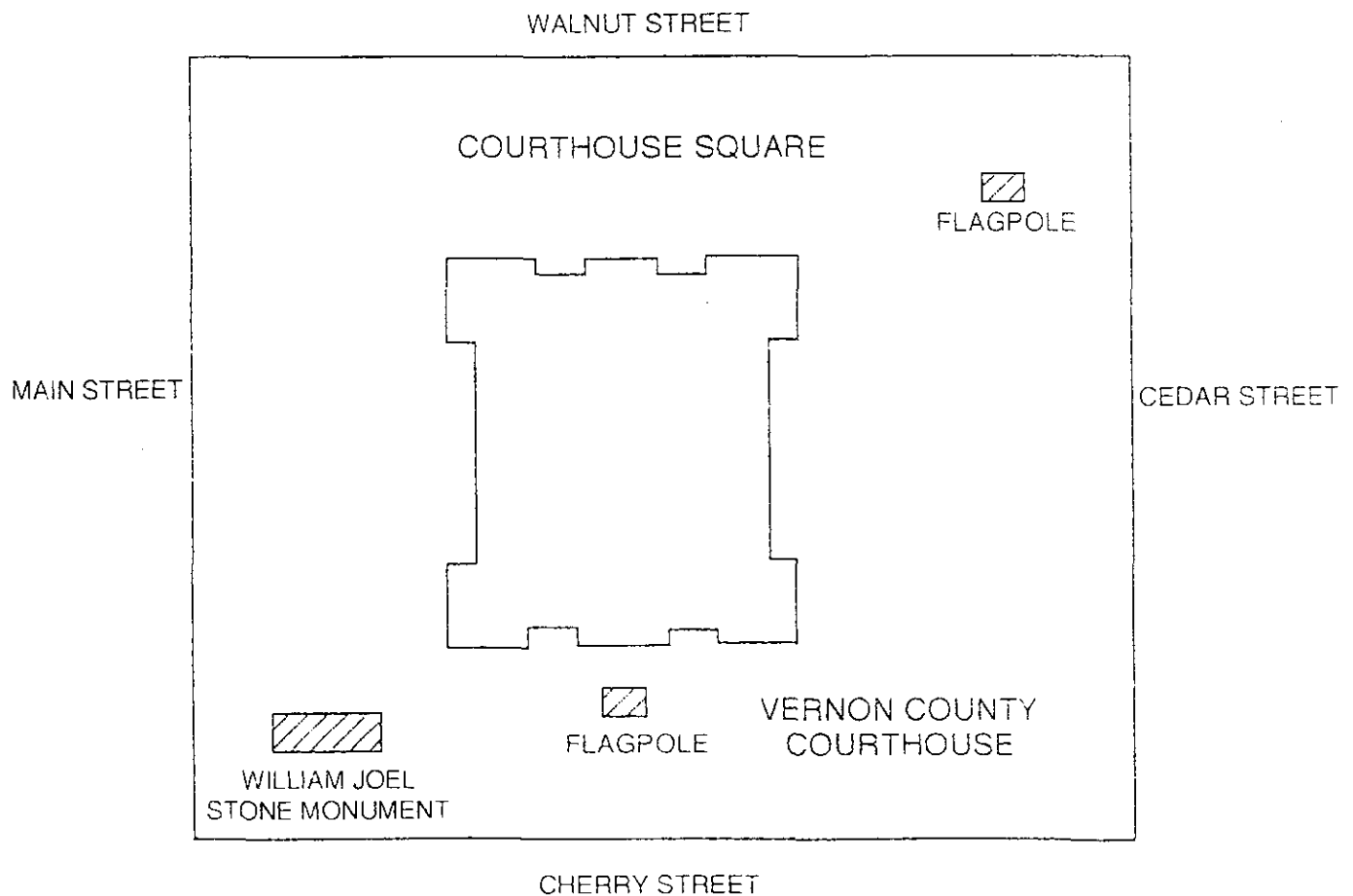
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4

Vernon County Courthouse
Vernon County, MO



SITE PLAN
Vernon County Courthouse
Nevada, Vernon County, Missouri



 = NOT COUNTED

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5

Vernon County Courthouse
Vernon County, MO

Summary: Completed in 1908, the Vernon County Courthouse, Nevada, Vernon County, is significant under Criteria A in the area of Politics/Government and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. For eighty-nine years, the Vernon County Courthouse has served as the seat of county government, the political and geographic focus of Vernon County. The Vernon County Courthouse is also an impressive local rendering of the Romanesque style which dominated courthouse architecture in Missouri in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as an excellent example of the work of prolific Missouri architect Robert G. Kirsch, whose work included an impressive array of county courthouses in the state. The period of significance for the Vernon County Courthouse begins with the completion of the building in 1908 and continues through 1947, the arbitrary National Register cutoff date for historic significance.

Narrative:

Courthouse Development: On February 27, 1855, Vernon County, named after State Senator Miles Vernon, was organized. In the same year, the county commissioners bought fifty acres for \$250.00 as the site of the county seat. The county seat was first called Fairview; later the name became Nevada City. The 1908 Vernon County Courthouse was the third seat of government of the county.

The first courts in the county met in private homes. In May 1856, James Bryan was awarded the contract for building the county's first courthouse, for which \$900.00 was appropriated. On June 23, 1857, the Vernon County Court accepted the first courthouse, which was a two story frame building twenty-eight by eighteen feet in dimension and located one block west of the public square. In 1860, a brick building to serve as the clerk's office was constructed on the southwest corner of the square. On May 25, 1863, on the courthouse square, the order was given by Union soldiers to burn the town only eight years after it was founded. Both the courthouse and clerk's office were destroyed in the fire, and the county seat was removed from Nevada to for reasons of safety and security. Records were stored in several locations in Arkansas and Kansas for the duration of the conflict and returned after the war.

In January 1867, citizens petitioned for a new courthouse and \$15,000 was appropriated for its construction. Completed in October, 1868, the second courthouse, a fifty by sixty foot brick building with a fifteen foot tower, actually cost approximately \$25,000. The courtroom was rented for local functions and events; churches and lodges were charged \$1.00, while dances, shows, or exhibitions were assessed \$10.00. Political, railroad, and agricultural meetings were not charged. This courthouse was subsequently altered to create more space and finally sold and demolished in 1906.

Following the removal of the second courthouse, twenty of Vernon County's most prominent men were chosen to serve on a committee to oversee the construction of a third courthouse. Theodore Lacaff, contractor, banker and builder, whose wide experience in supervising construction of the state capitol in Jefferson City, the state hospital in Nevada and many other famous buildings, was ample proof of his capabilities, agreed to superintend its construction. Ten architects presented plans to Vernon County court officials in March 1906, and by an overwhelming vote, officials selected the design submitted by Robert G. Kirsch. The court called for bids in July, but all exceeded the \$75,000.00 limit. In response, Kirsch altered his original plan, substituting *less expensive materials, providing contractors options on materials for the inside foundation above the footings, and altering the main staircase from marble and iron to quarter-sawed oak.* On July 27, 1906, the contract for construction of the Vernon County Courthouse was awarded to local contractors Beagles and Dye for \$71,186.00. The cornerstone was laid on October 30, 1906, the courthouse was finished in January 1908, and the building was accepted by the court in February 1908. The Vernon County Courthouse is similar in

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

Section 8.9 Page 6

Vernon County Courthouse
Vernon County, Mo.

design to the nineteenth-century courthouses of Adair and Johnson counties and the twentieth-century Polk County Courthouse; Kirsch was also the designer of the courthouse of Adair and Polk counties.

The Vernon County Courthouse has been the political, administrative, and judicial center for the county since its completion. The courthouse currently provides office space for the county clerk, treasurer, recorder, circuit clerk, assessor, circuit and probate judges, public administrator, prosecuting attorney, juvenile officer, the county commissioners and University Extension Center. The Vernon County Courthouse, with its familiar clock tower and imposing Romanesque detailing, remains the focus and symbol of government and law in the county eighty-nine years after its construction.

Architectural Significance: The Vernon County Courthouse is a massive, rough textured building with numerous rounded arches, four corner pavilions and a central clock tower. Its Romanesque architectural style was selected by many other Missouri counties for courthouses constructed from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. Following are Richardsonian Romanesque characteristics that are present in the Vernon County Courthouse: Numerous straight topped windows, divided into rectangular lights by stone mullions and transoms, are employed in addition to, and often together with, the arched type. Steep-gabled wall dormers are prominent elements in the design, as well as square towers which crown the pyramidal roofs and round turrets. The chimney is squat, heavy-set, and very plainly treated--without projecting caps. According to Ohman, the *Vernon County Courthouse was the last Romanesque style courthouse completed in the state.*

Robert George Kirsch, Architect: Robert G. Kirsch's designs for a Romanesque style seat of county government were also selected for Adair and Polk counties. Kirsch was born in Wisconsin in 1861, the son of German immigrant parents Rudolph and Emily Wegner Keirch. (The spelling of the surname was changed sometime after immigration.) Kirsch attended High School in Milwaukee and a commercial college in Michigan. After graduation he studied architecture under his father and other leading architects of the city of Milwaukee. He married Mary E. Schneider on July 21, 1883. A daughter, Meta K. (born 1886) married Cannon C. Hearne, February 21, 1921 in St. Louis. A son, Raymond (born 1895) became a mechanical engineer and tool designer.

In 1886, Kirsch became building superintendent for Henry J. VanRyn, a prominent Milwaukee architect. In 1891, Kirsch and Charles Rau formed a partnership which lasted until 1896. The first year of their partnership, Rau and Kirsch designed the Oconto County, Wisconsin Courthouse, which the Oconto Enquirer proclaimed "the finest and most pretentious building ever erected in Oconto County". Rau and Kirsch also designed the National Register listed Old Waukesha County Courthouse. Kirsch was still a resident of Milwaukee when, in 1897, R.G. Kirsch & Co. competed with eight other firms for the contract to design the Adair County, Missouri Courthouse at Kirksville (NRHP 1978).

Between 1889 and 1906, thirty-three courthouses were constructed in Missouri. Attracted by this building boom, Kirsch moved his practice to the state early in the twentieth century. Kirsch was employed to design the Carroll County Courthouse in 1901 (NRHP 1995). A partial set of blueprints for that building showed his address as Macon, Missouri. By 1906, he was living in St. Louis, where his practice included the design of residences and where he was residing when he won a competition for the design of the courthouse in Polk County in that year. Kirsch was also the architect of record for a remodeled Gasconade County Courthouse and an addition to that in Ste. Genevieve County. In 1909, Kirsch designed the Randall County, Texas Courthouse at Canyon and the Old First National Bank across the street from the Courthouse. Kirsch was apparently one of a very few nationally recognized out-of-state architects to design public structures in the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8.9 Page 7

Vernon County Courtho
Vernon County, I

state of Texas. In the Texas design and the design for Cooper County, Missouri, Courthouse (1912), Kirsch abandoned the Richardsonian Romanesque style of his four early Missouri Courthouses and instead choose Classical Revival. Kirsch last appeared in the St. Louis City directories in 1924.

9. Major Bibliographical References:

Vernon County Records dated December 2, 1905 - March 18, 1908, Pages 4-10, 12-14, 22-26, 30-31, and 34.

Johnson, J.B. "Vernon County Courthouses." Vol.1. History of Vernon County, Missouri. Edited by J.B. Johnson. Chicago: C.F. Cooper and Co., 1911.

Ohman, Marian M. Encyclopedia of Missouri Courthouses. University of Missouri-Columbia, Extension Division.

Sterett, Betty Scenes from the Past: Published in 1985 by Nevada Publishing Company, compiled by Donna Logan.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10. photographs Page 8

Vernon County Courthouse
Vernon County, MO

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description: At the southwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and Walnut Street, proceed east along the south curb line of Walnut Street to the intersection with Cedar Street; then proceed south along the west curb line of Cedar Street to the intersection with Cherry Street; then proceed west along the north curb line of Cherry Street to the intersection with Main Street; then proceed north along the east curb line of Main Street to the point of beginning. The boundary of the nominated property includes the entire Courthouse Square, Nevada, Vernon County.

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes the entire block associated historically with the nominated property. A monument and two flagpoles are also included within the boundary but are not significant in size or scale and are not associated with the significance of the nominated property and are, therefore, not included in the resource count.

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs, unless otherwise noted:

Vernon County Courthouse
Nevada, Vernon County, Missouri
Date photographed: December 1996
Photographer: Ginny Nash

#1 Courthouse from southeast corner.
photographer: Ralph Pokorney

#2 Courthouse from northwest corner.
photographer: Ralph Pokorney

#3 Stairway.

#4 Arched Ceiling.

#5 W.F. Norman tile ceiling.

#6 County clerk's safe.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

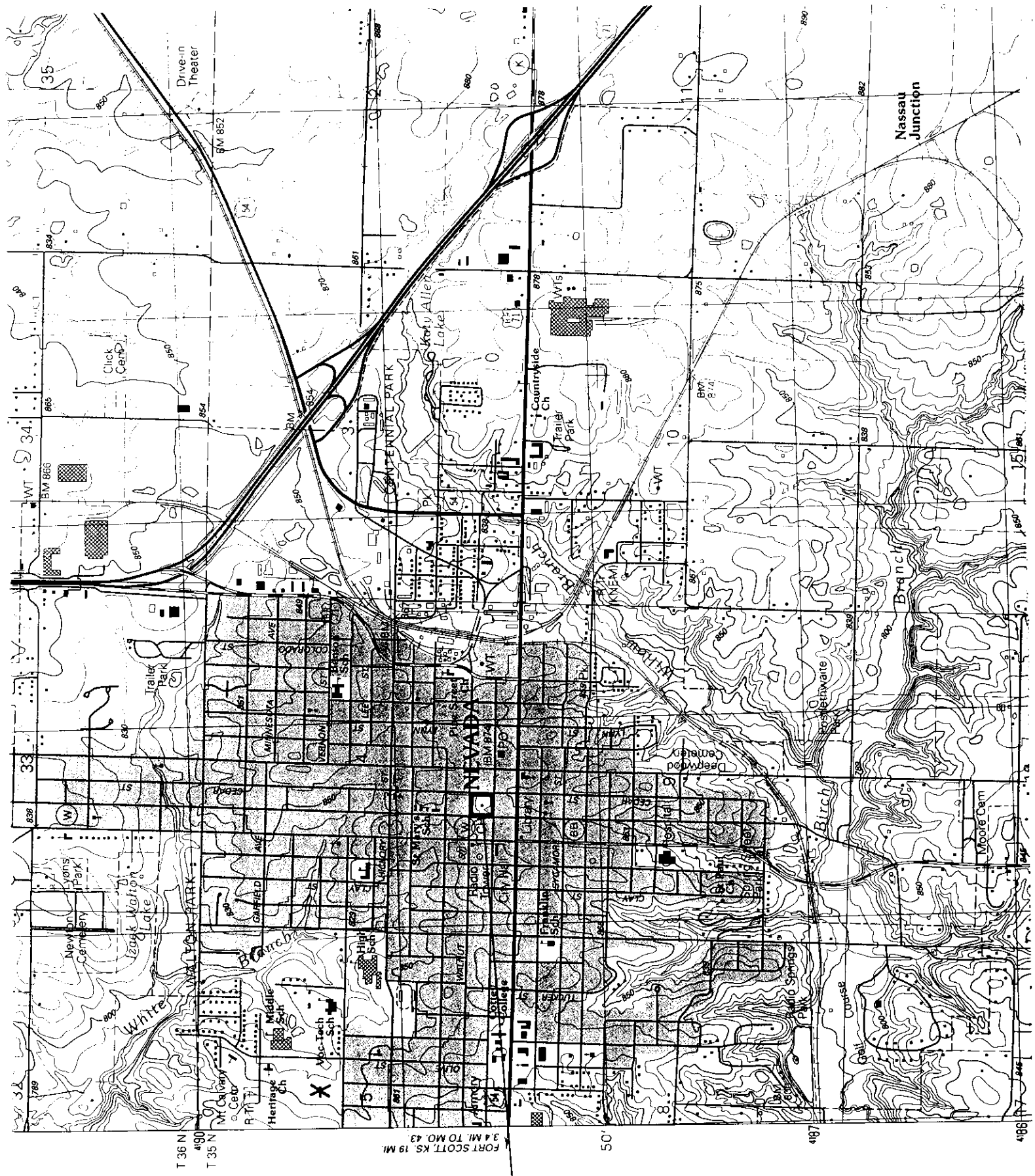
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 9

Vernon County Courthou
Vernon County, I

1. Angela Richardson
Executive Director
Main Street Nevada
209 West Walnut
Nevada, MO 64772
417/667-8111
December 17, 1996
Original draft nomination, items 1-11
2. Steven E. Mitchell
Assistant Director
Historic Preservation Program
Division of State Parks
Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102
573/751-7800
May 15, 1997
Editor and revisions, 1-11

VERNON COUNTY COURTHOUSE
VERNON COUNTY, MO
15/380585/4188580



Vernon County Courthouse
Vernon County, Mo

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Vernon County Courthouse
Vernon County, mo
2 of 6



Vernon County Canthorse
Vernon County, mo
3 of 6



Vernon County Cynthiana

Vernon County, Mo.

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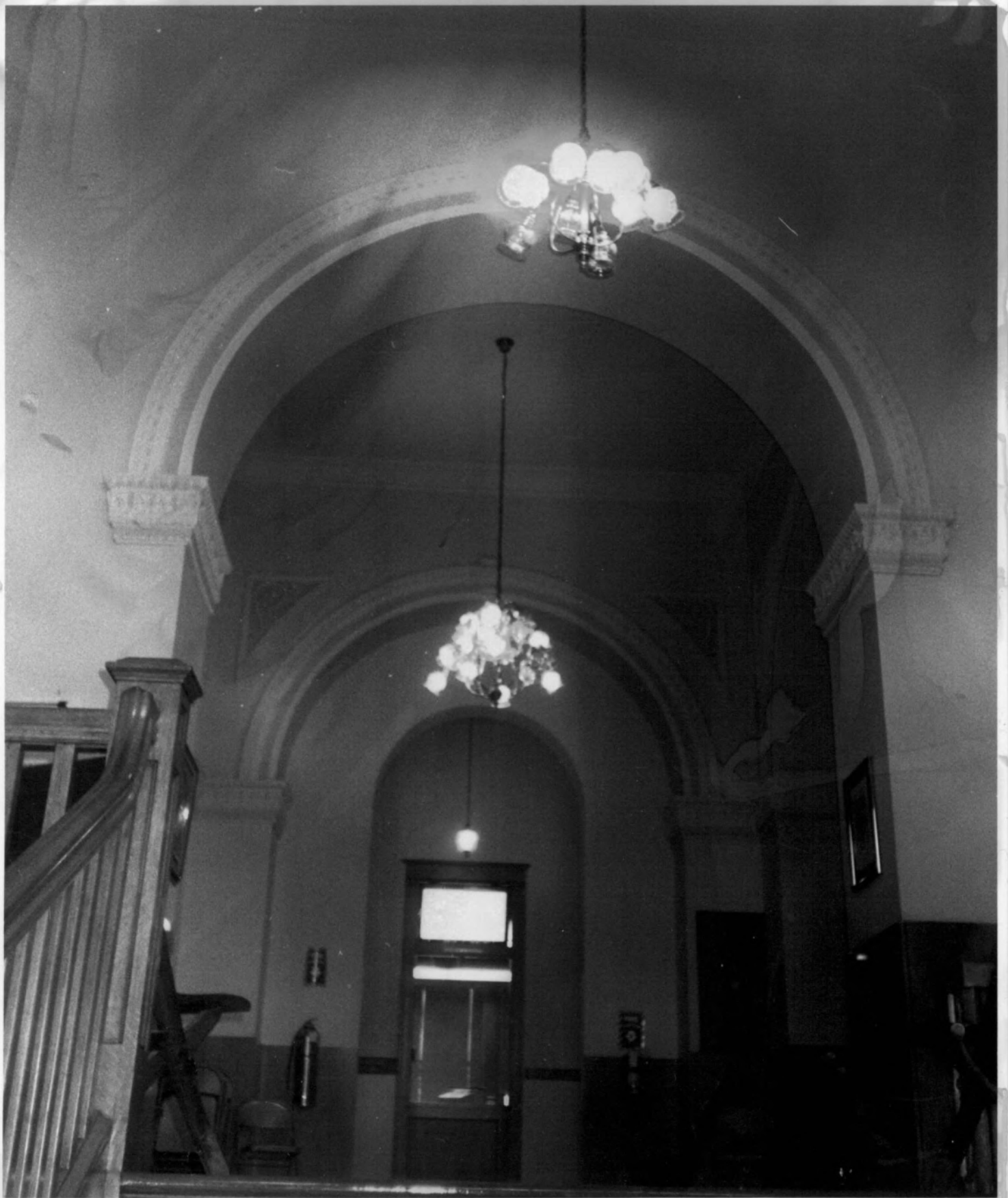
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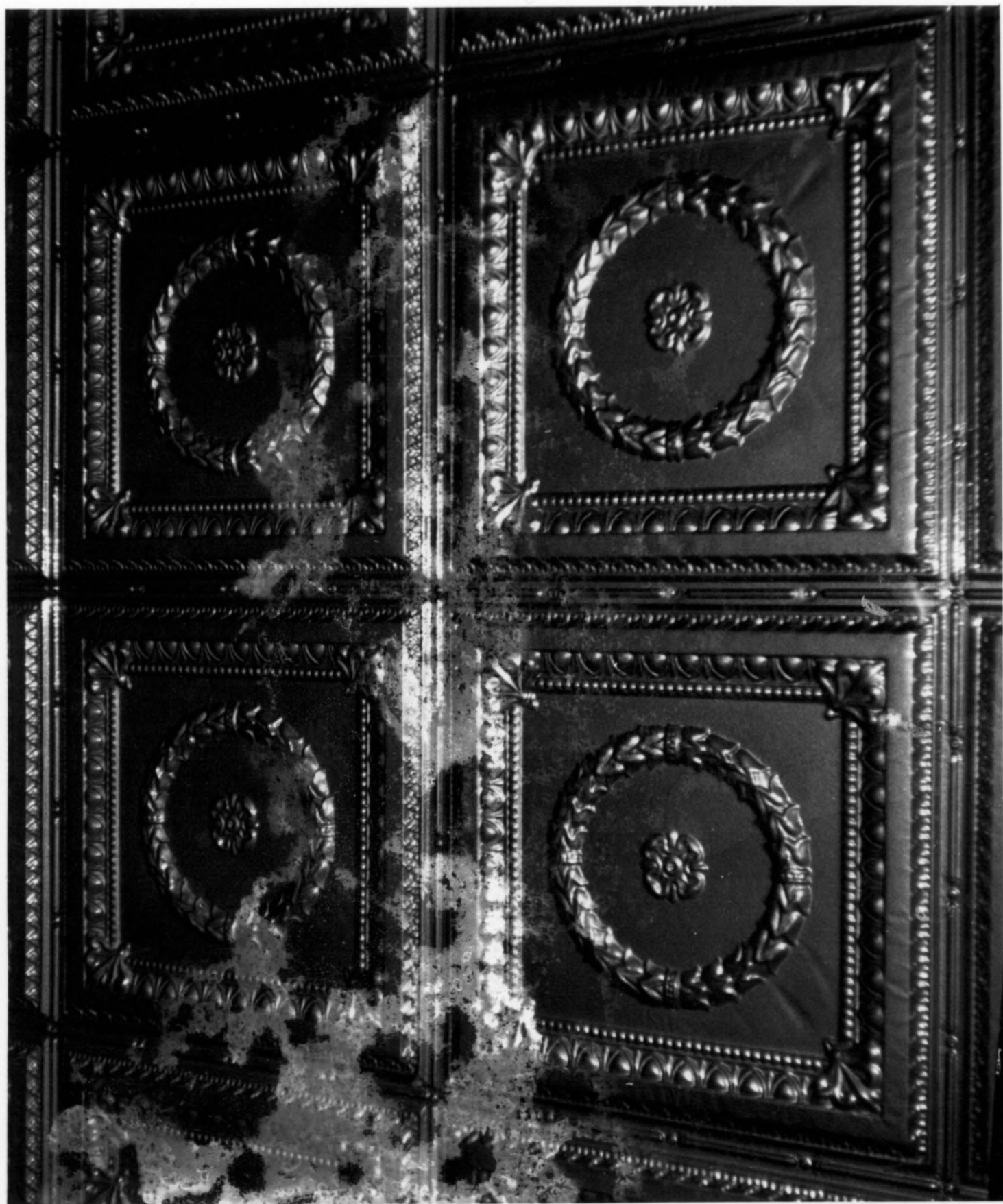
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Vernon County Courthouse

Vernon County, mo

5 of 6



Vernon County Courthouse

Vernon County, Mo

6 of 6



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Vernon County Courthouse (additional documentation)

other name/site number n/a

2. Location

street & town Courthouse Square N/A not for publication

city or town Nevada N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Vernon code 217 zip code 64772

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark A. Miles 08/20/04
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
☐ removed from the National
Register.
☐ other. (explain:) _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☒ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

_____	buildings
_____	sites
_____	structures
1	objects
1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/courthouse
Recreation and Culture/monument

Current Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/courthouse
Recreation and Culture/monument

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque
Other: Monument

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Stone
walls	Stone
roof	Asphalt
other	Bronze

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2.1

Vernon County Courthouse (additional documentation)
Vernon County, MO

The following replaces the last paragraph on page 2 of the original nomination:

William Joel Stone Monument

The William Joel Stone Monument, completed around February 1, 1935,¹ stands at the southwest corner of the courthouse lawn within the boundaries of the courthouse property as listed in 1997. The stone and bronze monument consists of a platform with benches, stepped base and a slightly larger than life-size statue of William Joel Stone. The design of the platform and base is attributed to Wight & Wight architects and the sculpture to Frederick Cleveland Hibbard.²

The platform is approximately 29' X 18' feet in size and is raised two steps above the surrounding lawn. The platform is edged with wide granite slabs and multi-colored slate pavers are laid across the top. Two granite benches sit on either side of the platform.

The monument base extends across the back of the platform and measures 20' wide and 4 ½' deep. The center stone of the base is the tallest (just over 7') and thickest (4 ½') and acts as the support for the bronze statue. The Missouri state seal, and Stone's birth and death date information are carved into the front (south side) of the stone. A large bronze plaque with an excerpt from a speech made by Stone is attached to the back (north elevation). Slabs of granite extend to either side of the center. These "wings" have decorative friezes incised across the top depicting stylized vines and flowers. Large gilded bronze plaques eulogizing Stone's life and work are centered on these slabs. Smaller granite stones with fluted bases and decorative friezes flank the ends of the base.

The bronze statue of Stone stands on the center section of the base. The sculpture depicts Stone standing before a classically designed chair. Stone stands very straight wearing a suit with a knee-length coat. The bronze is 7 ½' tall and, including the chair, 3' 5" wide.

In 2002-2003, the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office prepared specifications and funded a complete restoration of the platform, base and statue. The restoration consisted of repairing the platform, cleaning and repointing the masonry base, carefully cleaning the bronze statue and regilding the three bronze plaques. The monument looks much the same today as it did when constructed in 1935.

¹ "Memorial to William Joel Stone Completed," Southwest Mail (Nevada, MO), 1 February 1935.

² Smithsonian American Art Museum, "William J. Stone Memorial (sculpture)," Art Inventories Catalog, 2001-2002, <<http://sirius-artinventories.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=ariall#focus>> (18 June 2004). Copies of original Wight & Wight drawings for the monument platform and base are housed in the State Historic Preservation Office.

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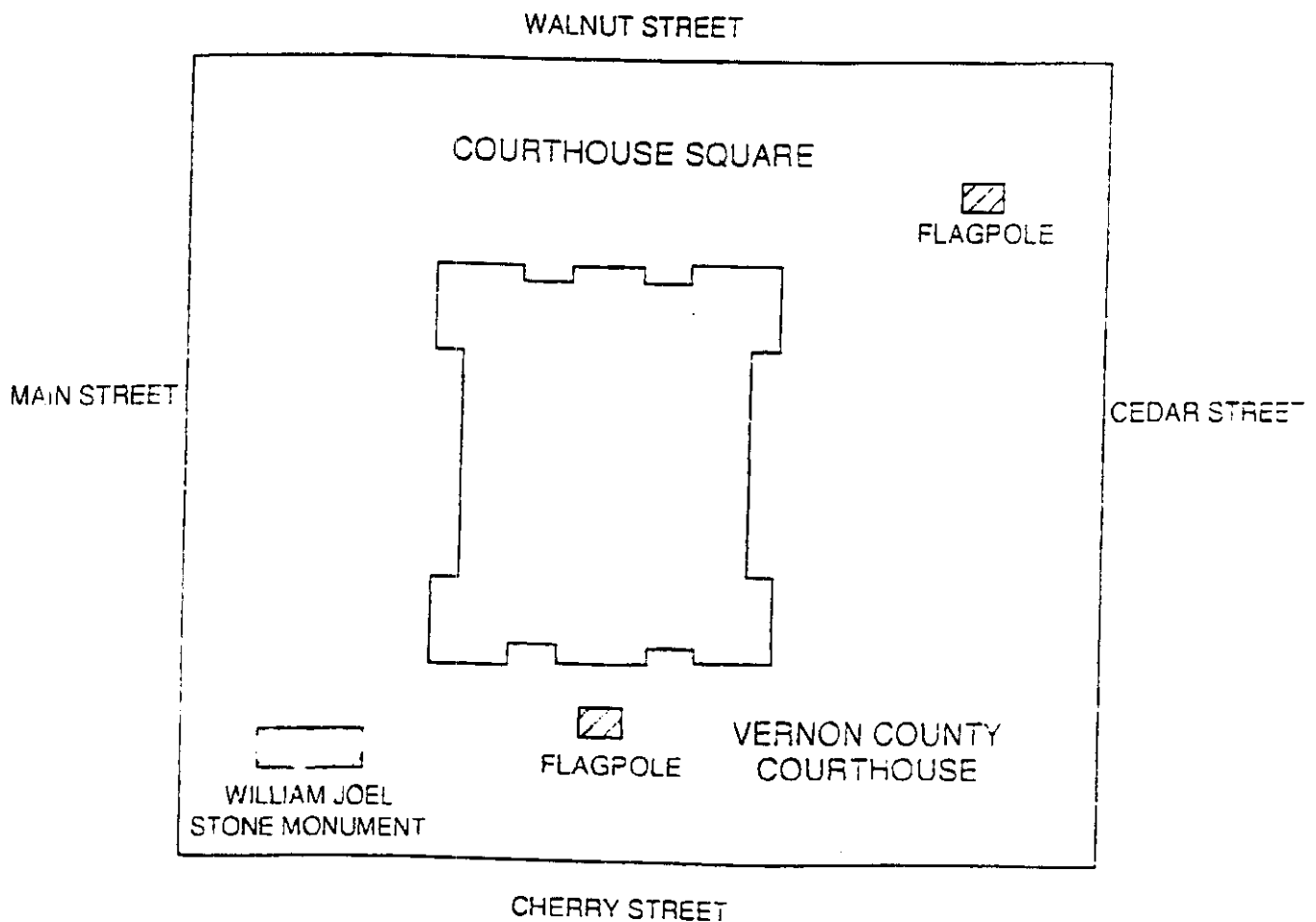
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SITE PLAN
Vernon County Courthouse
Nevada, Vernon County, Missouri



 = NOT COUNTED

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William Joel Stone Monument

Though mentioned briefly in the nomination of the Vernon County Courthouse (listed 6/27/1997), the William Joel Stone Monument was not counted in the resource count or described in the nomination. The assessment by the original preparer noted that "neither the monument nor flagpoles are significant in size or scale and they are not related to the areas of significance of the courthouse; they are not included in the resource count."³ As is typical in Missouri, however, monuments are constructed on courthouse lawns because courthouses are centers of local government and civic pride. The monument to William Joel Stone, a significant Missouri statesman, contributes to the monumental and civic character of the courthouse and associated property.

The granite and bronze William Joel Stone Monument was designed in 1934 and erected by the State of Missouri in 1935. The monument was designed by the Kansas City architectural firm of Wight & Wight and the bronze statue was sculpted by Frederick Cleveland Hibbard. C.W. Bruce of Fort Scott, Kansas was the contractor. Though completed near the beginning of February 1935, the dedication of the monument did not take place until October 11th of that year. The dedication ceremony drew dignitaries and visitors from across the state. Governor Guy Parks accepted the monument for the state and the memorial committee chair, Senator Bennett Clark also spoke. Former Senator James Reed, friend and colleague of Stone while he was a U.S. senator, gave the keynote address.⁴ All speakers praised the life and public service of William Joel Stone.

William Joel Stone, born in Kentucky on May 7, 1848, moved to Missouri as a teenager and studied at what is now the University of Missouri-Columbia. Working under his brother-in-law, Stone read law and passed the bar in 1869. After working for a brief time in Bedford, Indiana, he moved to Nevada, Vernon County, Missouri where he established a law practice. It was in Nevada that Stone began his long and active political career. He served as the Vernon County prosecuting attorney in 1873-1874, and was U.S. representative from Missouri for three terms (March 4, 1885-March 3, 1891). Stone later served a term as governor (1893-1897) and was elected to three terms in the U.S. Senate beginning in 1903. He died in office on April 14, 1918.⁵

Stone has the distinction of being the only person to serve Missouri as U.S. representative, governor, and senator. His career as a representative was relatively uneventful, though he came to the national limelight as governor and senator. While governor, Stone became known as a friend to the common man when he refused to use the state guard to protect strikebreakers. He also supported early workmen's compensation legislation that would make it

³ Angela Richardson and Steven E. Mitchell, "Vernon County Courthouse" (Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, listed 27 June 1997), 7.2.

⁴ "The United States Senator W.J. Stone Memorial Dedicated," The Nevada Daily Mail, 11 October 1935.

⁵ Biographical Directory of the United States Senate, "Stone, William Joel, 1848-1918," (n.d.) <<http://bioguide.congress.gov>>(18 June 2004).

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easier for workers to win damages from employers after on-the-job accidents. Even though the legislation failed, Stone remained a popular figure after he left office. He continued to be active in politics at a national level, serving on the Democratic National Committee and as U.S. senator from 1903 to 1918.⁶

As a US Senator, Stone was active in tariff and currency reform. He was also a close advisor to President Wilson and supporter of the president's hope for a peaceful negotiated end to WWI and plan for a league of nations. The two split over the plan to arm U.S. ships against German submarines and take other direct actions in preparing and potentially participating in war. Stone felt the measures outlined by Wilson set a precedent that handed the president the power to determine war or peace. Though Stone later supported many of President Wilson's wartime proposals, his reputation had been tarnished by his initial stand against US involvement in WWI. On April 10, 1918, Stone suffered a stroke on the way to the Capitol and died four days later.⁷

Though vilified by the media and many others for his initial stand against U.S. involvement in WWI, Stone's patriotism and sense of duty was praised after his death. In 1933 the State of Missouri appropriated \$15,000 for the memorial and additional funding was obtained from public subscription.⁸ The architectural firm of Wight & Wight was contracted to design the platform and base of the monument, and Frederick Hibbard sculpted the bronze statue of Stone. Plans for the monument were completed in 1934 and the monument was dedicated in 1935.

Frederick C. Hibbard

Frederick Cleveland Hibbard was born near Canton, Missouri on June 15, 1881. Family stories note that he "nearly drove his mother crazy by casting plaster statues in the farm house kitchen,"⁹ but Hibbard himself attributed his interest in art to his first art teacher at Christian University (now Culver-Stockton College). He noted that "When I began work in the Art Class I had my first taste of heaven on earth."¹⁰ After studying to be an electrical engineer and working briefly in Kansas City, Hibbard moved to Chicago where he studied at the Art Institute of Chicago. Hibbard studied under and later became an assistant to Lorado Taft. Hibbard opened his own studio in Chicago in 1904.¹¹

Hibbard's son Robert noted that that the early years of his father's career were lived in "rather

⁶ Dictionary of Missouri Biography, s.v. "Stone, William Joel (1848-1918)," by Ruth Warner Towne.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Smithsonian.

⁹ Robert Hibbard, son of Frederick Hibbard to State Historical Society of Missouri, 20 December, 1964, Missouri Artist Files at the State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.

¹⁰ Dr. Michael Kramme. "Missouri Sculptor Frederick Cleveland Hibbard," Missouri Magazine, (Winter 1993/1994), 23.

¹¹ Fielding, Mantle. Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors and Engravers. (Green Farms, Conn: Modern Books & Crafts, Inc., 1974), 168.

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intermittent debt."¹² By 1914 Frederick Hibbard's work was becoming more recognized. In that year he won the John C. Shaffer prize given by the Art Institute of Chicago,¹³ and received several commissions. During his career, Hibbard was a relatively prolific sculptor of public monuments, notably in the Midwest and South. The Smithsonian Institution's inventories of American painting and sculpture includes over 60 listings for monuments and works of sculpture created by Hibbard. Nine of Hibbard's works are known to have been commissioned for parks, courthouse squares and other locations in Missouri. Other Hibbard sculptures in Missouri include:

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, Riverview Park, Hannibal, Marion County, 1913
Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan, Richmond, Ray county, 1917
William Henry Hatch, Central Park, Hannibal, Marion County, 1914
Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn at the foot of Cardiff Hill, Hannibal, Marion County, 1926
Champ Clark, Bowling Green, Pike County, 1926
D. R. Atchison, Plattsburg, Clinton County, 1926
James Pendergast Memorial, Kansas City, Jackson County, 1913
General James Shields, Carrollton, Carrollton County, 1910

The William Joel Stone monument was Hibbard's last known commission in Missouri. Of the statue he said, "I transformed Stone into clay, clay into wax, wax into sand and sand into bronze, and when I finished the bronze was Stone."¹⁴ Hibbard died on December 12, 1950.

¹² Robert Hibbard.

¹³ Kramme, 23.

¹⁴ Nevada Daily Mail.

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October 1935.

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Historic Preservation Office.

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Amendment prepared by:

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573-751-7800

Photo Log

The following information is true for all photographs:

Vernon County Courthouse (additional documentation)
Nevada, Vernon County, Missouri

Photographer: Tiffany Patterson

Location of Negatives: Missouri State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 176, Jefferson
City, Missouri 65102

Date: June 2004

7. Monument and platform, looking northwest.
8. Monument, looking north.
9. Back of monument, looking south.



